

CLAIMS

Claim 1 - In an automated litter box system which comprises:

- a) a litter box configured to contain animal litter therein; said litter box having a bottom surface for placement on a solid environmental surface;
- b) an automatic waste removing device which is configured to automatically remove animal waste and clumped litter from said litter box;
- c) a waste receptacle connected to said litter box, said waste receptacle having a bottom at one end and an aperture located at another end wherein said aperture is positioned and configured to receive said animal waste and clumped litter which is removed from said litter box whereby said waste and clumped litter pass through said aperture and accumulate in said waste receptacle; said waste receptacle including a lid which covers said aperture to thereby enclose said waste receptacle; and
- d) a lid opening and closing device connected to said lid to open and close said lid:

wherein the improvement comprises said bottom of said waste receptacle being located lower than said bottom surface of said litter box.

Claim 2- The automated litter box system of claim 1, wherein said bottom surface of said litter box rests on a top surface of an elevated platform, said elevated platform being elevated relative to the bottom of said waste receptacle whereby said bottom of said waste receptacle is lower than a bottom surface of said platform.

Claim 3 - The automated litter box system of claim 2, wherein further includes at least one animal access ramp connected thereto wherein said ramp either extends

downward from the lid of said waste receptacle or extends downward from said litter box.

Claim 4 - The automated litter box system of claim 3 having one of said ramps wherein said one ramp extends downward from said lid.

Claim 5 - The automated litter box system of claim 4, wherein said elevated platform is elevated by at least one support member which is attached to said platform and which extends downward therefrom.

Claim 6 - The apparatus of claim 5, wherein said at least one support member comprises a plurality of legs.

Claim 7 - The automated litter box system of claim 6 which further includes a base underneath said platform wherein said base is spaced apart from the bottom surface of said platform; and said plurality of legs comprise at least two platform support panels wherein said platform support panels have an upper end attached to said platform and a lower end attached to said base whereby said bottom surface of said platform, said platform support panels and said base define a volume underneath said litter box for storing articles therein.

Claim 8 - The automated litter box system of claim 7 which further includes an extension of said base wherein said extension extends underneath said ramp, said extension of the base having one end connected to a lower end of said ramp whereby said ramp extends downward from said lid to said one end of the extension of said base; and said automated litter box system further comprises a pair of ramp support panels which extend downward from an edge on either side of said ramp to the

extension of said base, whereby said ramp, said ramp support panels, said lid and said extension of said base define a waste collection volume of said waste receptacle; said waste receptacle having a height which extends vertically from a bottom of said lid to said extension of said base.

Claim 9 - The automated litter box system of claim 8, wherein said waste receptacle further comprises a disposable waste collecting container located in said volume of said waste receptacle wherein said container has an opening at one end thereof, said opening of said container being connected around a periphery of said aperture whereby said waste and clumped animal litter passes through said aperture and collects in said disposable container.

Claim 10 - The automated litter box system of claim 9 wherein said base and said platform are substantially horizontally disposed and said platform support panels and said ramp support panels are substantially vertically disposed.

Claim 11 - The automated litter box system of claim 9, wherein said disposable container is a bag with an opening at one end thereof and the opening of said bag is connected to said aperture by a collar wherein said collar is configured to attach to the periphery of said aperture.

Claim 12 - The automated litter box system of claim 11, wherein said bag is attached to said collar by a plurality of clips.

Claim 13 - An apparatus for increasing waste storage capacity of an automated litter box system of the type which comprises a litter box configured to contain animal litter therein; an automatic waste removing device for removing animal waste and

clumped litter from said litter box; a waste receptacle having an aperture which is positioned and configured to receive said animal waste and clumped litter which is removed from said litter box whereby said waste and clumped litter pass through said aperture and accumulate in said waste receptacle; a lid which covers said aperture to thereby enclose said waste receptacle; and a lid opening and closing device connected to said lid to open and close said lid;

said apparatus comprising:

a) an elevated platform which is configured to hold said automated litter box system thereon so that said aperture of said litter box system is positioned above said platform when said litter box system is placed on said platform;

b) a replacement animal waste receptacle which includes an aperture for the introduction of animal waste into said receptacle wherein said replacement animal waste receptacle and aperture thereof are configured to replace the waste receptacle and aperture of said automated litter box system so that after replacement of said waste receptacle by said replacement waste receptacle, said waste and clumped litter pass through the aperture of said replacement animal waste receptacle and collect in said replacement animal waste receptacle, with the proviso that said replacement animal waste receptacle is also configured to extend from a point above said platform to a point below said platform when said litter box system is placed on said platform and said waste receptacle of said litter box system is replaced by said replacement waste receptacle, whereby said replacement waste receptacle has a larger volume relative to a volume of said waste receptacle of said automated litter box system;

c) an animal access ramp connected to said apparatus wherein said ramp has an upper end and a lower end wherein said upper end is positioned above said platform whereby said ramp extends downward from above said platform to provide access by an animal to said automated litter box system when said system is placed on top of said platform.

Claim 14 - The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said ramp is configured so that said upper end of said ramp lies adjacent to said lid of said automated litter box system when said system is placed on top of said platform.

Claim 15 - The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said elevated platform is elevated by at least one support member which is attached to said platform and which extends downward therefrom.

Claim 16 - The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said at least one support member comprises a plurality of legs.

Claim 17 - The apparatus of claim 16, which further includes a base underneath said elevated platform wherein said base is spaced apart from said elevated platform; and said plurality of legs comprise at least two platform support panels wherein said platform support panels have an upper end attached to said platform and a lower end attached to said base whereby said bottom surface of said elevated platform, said platform support panels, and said base define a volume underneath said litter box for storing articles therein.

Claim 18 - The apparatus of claim 17 which further includes an extension of said base wherein said extension extends underneath said ramp, said base having one end

connected to a lower end of said ramp whereby said ramp extends from said one end of said base to the lid of said automated litter box system when said system is placed on top of said platform; and said apparatus further comprises a pair of ramp support panels which extend downward from an edge on either side of said ramp to the extension of said base, whereby said ramp, said ramp support panels, said lid and said extension of said base define a waste collection volume of said replacement waste receptacle when said litter box system is placed on said platform and said waste receptacle of said litter box system is replaced by said replacement waste receptacle; said replacement waste receptacle having a height which extends vertically from a lower surface of said lid to said extension of said base when said waste receptacle of said litter box system is replaced by said replacement waste receptacle and said litter box system is placed on said platform.

Claim 19 - The apparatus of claim 18 wherein said replacement waste receptacle further comprises a disposable waste collecting container located in said volume of said replacement waste receptacle wherein said container has an opening at one end thereof, said opening of said container being connected around a periphery of the aperture of the replacement waste receptacle whereby said waste and clumped animal litter passes through said aperture of the replacement waste receptacle and collects in said disposable container.

Claim 20 - The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said base and said platform are substantially horizontally disposed and said platform support panels and said ramp support panels are substantially vertically disposed.

Claim 21 - The apparatus of claim 20 wherein said disposable container is a bag with an opening at one end thereof and the opening of said bag is connected to said aperture of the replacement waste receptacle by a collar wherein said collar is configured to attach to the periphery of said aperture of the replacement waste receptacle.

Claim 22 - The apparatus of claim 21 wherein said bag is attached to said collar by a plurality of clips.

Claim 23 - An apparatus for increasing waste storage capacity of an automated litter box system wherein said apparatus comprises:

a plurality of support members;

means for joining said support members to create a stable platform on which a pet litter box is placed;

a conveyance element to provide pet access from a floor to said platform; and

means for joining said conveyance element with said platform;

whereby said automated litter box system will be elevated off of said floor or off of a planer resting surface such that a pet owner can use a larger conventional waste storage container to collect pet waste therein to thereby reduce the frequency in which the pet owner needs to empty the waste collection container, resulting in less effort being required from the pet owner to maintain the litter box in a sanitary manner.

Claim 24 - A method for increasing waste storage capacity of an automated litter box system which comprises providing the apparatus of claim 13 and placing said automated litter box system on said apparatus wherein said automated litter box

system rests on said elevated platform; and replacing the waste receptacle of the automated litter box system with the replacement waste receptacle of said apparatus.